

antes de pre-
sionar el
glorioso, ¿por
qué no hoy?

God has given to us, I know well, the liberty of use, but only so far as necessary; and He has determined that the use should be common. And it is monstrous for one to live in luxury, while many are in want. How much more glorious

Miguel
y
Panchito

Juan Mateo Guaticabanú:

The First to be Baptized in America

Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo

San Tom
plor y
oliver

than lifeless ornaments! Whom have lands ever benefited so much as conferring favours has? It remains for us, therefore, to do away with this allegation: Who, then, will have the more sumptuous life? The more sumptuous? Men,

The Role of the Barrio

y las
mujeres
latinas

I would say, if they make use of them impartially and indifferently. But if it be impossible for all to exercise self-restraint, yet, with a view to the use of what is necessary, we must seek after what can be most readily procured, bidding a long farewell to these superfluities.

in the Doctrine of Original Sin

Miguel A. De La Torre

In fine, they must accordingly utterly cast off ornaments as girls' gewgaws, rejecting adornment itself entirely. For they ought to be adorned with the inner woman beautiful. For in the soul alone are beauty and deformity shown. Wherefore also only the virtuous man is really beautiful and good. And it is laid down as a dogma, that only the beautiful is good. And excellence alone appears through the beautiful body, and blossoms out in the flesh, exhibiting the amiable comeliness of self-control, whenever the character like a beam of light gleams in the form. For the beauty of each plant and animal consists in its individual excellence. And the excellence of man is righteousness, and temperance, and manliness, and godliness. The beautiful man is, then, he who is just, temperate, and in a word, good, not he who is rich. But now even the soldiers wish to be decked with gold, not having read that poetical saying:

Reseña bibliográfica

Pablo A. Jiménez

Reflexiones

teológicas

desde

el

margen

hispano

"With childish folly to the war he came,
Laden with store of gold."¹

¿el antiguo?

But the love of ornament, which is far from caring for virtue, claims the body for itself, when the love of the beautiful has changed to empty show, is to be utterly expelled.

¹ *Ibid.*, ii. 872.

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PRESENTACION

Hace unos años, el mundo conmemoró y discutió el quinto centenario de la llegada de Colón a estas playas. Luego el asunto quedó olvidado, y otros acontecimientos han atraído la atención de la humanidad. Este año, sin embargo, se cumple otro quinto centenario: el del primer bautismo de un nativo de estas tierras. Ese aniversario pasará desapercibido, en parte porque se trata de un acontecimiento menos dramático, pero también en parte porque se trata de un indio, y no del famoso Almirante del Mar Océano. La aventura colombina mereció atención mundial. La aventura de Guaticabanú, entregándose a un Dios hasta entonces desconocido, ha quedado olvidada. Con orgullo publicamos el artículo de **Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo**, que trata de remediar esa situación. El Dr. Stevens-Arroyo es profesor en City University of New York, y Director Ejecutivo de PARAL (Program for the Analysis of Religion Among Latinos).

El segundo artículo, por **Miguel A. De La Torre**, muestra que el cristianismo, con todo y su poder liberador, también ha sido interpretado y utilizado para continuar y sacralizar la explotación que comenzó en 1492. La doctrina del pecado original debe ser reinterpretada de modo que tome en cuenta las dimensiones sociales del pecado, tan evidentes en el barrio. El Rev. De La Torre es estudiante doctoral en Temple University.

Por último, el libro de Roberto Goizueta reseñado por **Pablo A. Jiménez** muestra que la marcha continúa, y que, como antaño para Guaticabanú, la fe cristiana tiene poder para sostener a nuestro pueblo aun en medio de sus sufrimientos y angustias. El Dr. Jiménez es Director Ejecutivo de AETH (Asociación para la Educación Teológica Hispana), y ha contribuido anteriormente a las páginas de *Apuntes*.

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Juan Mateo Guaticabanú: The First to be Baptized in America

Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo

On September 21, 1496 for the first time in this hemisphere a native of the Americas was baptized a Christian. Nearly twenty-five years before Cortés set foot in the Aztec capital, a Taíno in the Cibao region of Española in the Caribbean chose Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior. Many Latinos today are unaware of the events surrounding the conversion of Juan Mateo Guaticabanú, who also won the palms of martyrdom. But in contradiction to a bias that makes scholars afraid to recognize that Native Americans could embrace the faith willingly, fear of Spanish Catholic brutality is not the sole explanation of native conversion. Regardless of the entanglement of religion with political motives, the truth and noble goodness of the Christian message attracted converts. We Latinos, who can critically question the Americanizing tendencies of U.S. religion without denying the validity of our own Christian commitments, should be the first to understand that Spanish imperialism was not powerful enough to dim the brilliance of the Christian message.

This article digests the results of many years of study on Taíno religion and Spanish evangelization.¹ But despite the brevity of my description here, the baptism of Juan Mateo Guaticabanú is more easily verified than the 1531 appearance of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico. Transcending the historical facts of the baptism, however, is its theological importance, which has gone virtually unexplored. As we approach the historic birthday of Latino Christianity, I would like to share these reflections in the hope that they will inspire us in the positive legacy of evangelization, much as the Columbus' quincentennial warned us of the negative side of Christianity's entrance into the Americas.

I

Columbus' first description of the native Taínos of the Caribbean compares them to the natives of Gran Canaria. It should not be surprising that the Canary Islands in the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Africa were the analogue for the Admiral's narrative, since Columbus' first voyage in 1492 occurred midway between the subjugation of Gran Canaria in 1488 and the conquest of Tenerife in

A more complete version of this article can be found in "Juan Mateo Guaticabanú, September 21, 1496: Evangelization and Martyrdom in the time of Columbus" in the Fall 1996 edition of the *Catholic Historical Review*.

1496. But the physical appearance of the natives was not the only similarity between the Canary and the Caribbean Islands for the Admiral. As I have shown,² both the Canary Islands and the Caribbean islands were colonized with a medieval, feudal model that placed great emphasis upon the creation of landed estates over which the European settlers held title. Columbus and the colonizers of the Canaries tried to reproduce medieval society by placing themselves as lords over the natives who were treated as serfs.³ These entrepreneurial *hidalgos* clashed with missionaries like the Franciscans who preferred to leave the chiefs in power, arguing that Christianization was longer lasting when a converted native ruler brought his own "vassals" to the faith without Spanish arms.⁴ Trying to avoid rapacious feudalism on the one hand and the frustrations of fickle voluntaristic conversion on the other, the Spanish monarchs Isabela and Fernando insisted that evangelization and colonization go hand in hand.⁵ The monarchs offered protection to native chiefs who converted, but left open the possibility of feudal servitude to those who did not.

When Columbus took some Taínos back to Spain after the voyage of discovery in 1492, he presented to the monarchy a romanticized picture of the natives as "noble savages," and made much of their subsequent baptism.⁶ Columbus' actions were meant to suggest that he would succeed in Christianizing the Taínos where the *hidalgos* of the Canary Islands had failed. But these baptisms in Spain of seven native hostages do not equate to evangelization of a people and their culture. That was a more elusive goal.

We need to recognize that the beginnings of the American enterprise were inauspicious. In 1493, no one knew if any land lay west of "the Indies." Columbus went to his grave in 1503 without assurance that the colony would continue, because few believed with him that these islands were stepping stones to trade with China. Thus, the events leading to the first American baptism were stalked by the spectre of failure.

Columbus' second voyage in 1493 was intended as a colonizing expedition, but it quickly turned into a disaster. From a fleet of seventeen ships and a force of about 1,300 men, which had landed triumphantly on Española on November 27,

2 See "The Inter-Atlantic Paradigm: the Failure of Spanish Medieval Colonization of the Canary and Caribbean Islands" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35:3 (July 1993) 515-543. This article was awarded the 1994 Harold Eugene Davis Prize by the Middle Atlantic Council on Latin American Studies.

3 Felipe Fernández Armesto, *Columbus* (Oxford, 1991) pp. 135-138.

4 Stevens-Arroyo, *op. cit.* pp. 533-34; for the killing of missionaries to the Canaries in 1483, see p. 520.

5 This is the central notion of Antonio Rumeu de Armas in *La política indigenista de Isabel la Católica* (Valladolid, 1969). See also Rumeu de Armas, "Los problemas derivados del contacto de razas en los albores del renacimiento" *Cuadernos de Historia*, Madrid, 1 (1967) pp. 86-90; *et passim*.

6 Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Historia I*, 96 in *Obras escogidas*, Juan Pérez de Tudela Bueso y Emilio López Oto, eds., 5 vols. (Madrid, 1957-1958).

1493, Columbus had seen his forces steadily shrink. Within weeks of his arrival, disease, discontent and the lack of food had forced him to abandon his first landfall and seek a new settlement near the Bajabónico River, which he named Isabela, to flatter the queen.

But this first settlement did not prosper. In February 1494, half the troops and ships were sent back to Spain to lighten the burden of seeking provisions for the colony. Unable to grow familiar European crops for the colonists in tropical soils, Columbus and his troops had turned into virtual bandits, terrorizing and raiding native Taíno villages for food. During the Spring of 1494, the Admiral established two forts in the interior of Española, one named "Fort St. Thomas" after the apostle who had doubted the resurrection of Jesus and the other, located some "ten or twelve leagues" west of what became the present day town of Santiago in the Dominican Republic, was named for a notorious sinner, Magdalena.⁷ Meanwhile, any settler found raiding the stockpile Columbus hoarded in his own house was cruelly punished. Columbus did not anticipate that by constructing a colony of "might over right," he would undercut his own authority and lay the foundations for mutiny.

II

In the middle of September, 1494, while Columbus was away on an expedition to find Cathay, the sporadic rebelliousness became a mutiny when the ranking commander, Mosen Pedro Margarit, and the priest in charge of evangelization, Fray Bernardo Boyl, fled for Spain.⁸ With Boyl's departure,⁹ the first stage of evangelization of the American natives ended scarcely nine months after it had begun. The only measure taken by Boyl towards a systematic effort at evangelization had been sending some two dozen natives back to Spain with Antonio Torres in February 1494 in order to have native speakers trained as catechists. But the physical deterioration of most natives taken to Spain undercut plans to train native catechists away from their island homelands.¹⁰ Friar Boyl and several disgruntled knights filed legal grievances in the Spanish courts against

Las Casas, *op. cit.* I, p. 100.

Las Casas, *op. cit.*, I, p. 102.

Boyl celebrated the first Eucharistic liturgy in America on the Feast of the Epiphany in 1494. This missionary had received from Pope Alexander VI faculties over all the Taínos *Piis fidelium* (25 June 1493). Besides the Benedictine Boyl, the missionaries included the Mercedarian Juan Infante and three Franciscans: Father Rodrigo Pérez and Brothers Juan de Deule and Juan Tisim, the latter from French provinces. To these must be added the catechist and Hieronymite from Catalonia, Ramón Pané. (León Lopetegui, SJ and Félix Zubillaga, SJ, *Historia de la iglesia en la América española*, Madrid, 1965, p. 214). The Franciscan brothers and Ramón Pané remained in Española.

¹⁰ For the fate of Taínos sent to Spain, see Luis Rivera Pagán, *A Violent Evangelism: The Political and Religious Conquest of the Americas*, (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), p. 95, citing Cuneo.

Columbus.¹¹

Columbus knew that each of the officers in the colony was a potential leader for still another mutiny. To control the natives, he invaded the valley below the Cibao, where a fort named Concepción de la Vega was later erected. Desperate to raise money for the colony and to buy good will, in February of 1495 the Admiral sent Antonio de Torres back to Spain, this time with five hundred captured Taínos to be sold on the slave markets of Seville. But just as she had done for the native Canarians decades before, Queen Isabela repudiated the slave trade among the Taínos, ordering the manumission of the Taínos in 1500. In one of history's ironies, Pedro Las Casas, an adventurer on the second voyage, had given a Taíno slave to his son, Bartolomé. Because of the queen's decree, however, the Taíno servant was freed and in 1502 his former master, Bartolomé de Las Casas, journeyed to Española as an unordained catechist.¹²

Even before the queen's decree of emancipation, Columbus sensed that a cloud hung over his ability to rule as a feudal lord without royal intervention, and he left for Spain in 1496 to argue his case personally. This absence produced the mutiny of Francisco Roldán. Perhaps disgruntled because he had been denied command over one of the forts, Roldán capitalized on discontent among the Spanish soldiers. Bartolomé Columbus' bitter quarrel with Miguel Díaz until July of 1496 over control of the gold mine in the south added to the fear of many settlers that they would never be allowed to prosper from the enterprise as long as the Columbus family was in power. In the spring of 1497, Roldán took his men north to Isabela, which was under Diego Columbus, another of the brothers from Genoa, where he begged for meat and part of the stores in the warehouse of the Admiral. When Roldán and his rag-tag band were rebuffed, they slew the horses and cattle, (presumably because they were starved for meat) and marched on for what proved to be an unsuccessful attempt to capture the fort at Concepción.

Through the rest of 1497, Roldán and his men lived in rebellion. Hoping that the crown would issue decrees against the Admiral, Roldán anticipated justification for his revolt just as had Friar Boyl three years earlier. When the first ships returned from Spain in March of 1498, however, the colonists' preparations for Columbus' return made it clear that the Admiral had retained his authority. Roldán fled to the southwestern corner of Española in a region called Xaraguá (now Haiti), settling in a native village and adopting some of the Taíno ways. About fifty of the newly arrived colonists deserted to join Roldán, whose adaptations to native life included polygamy. Moreover, the outlaws won over several Taíno chieftains by eliminating the tribute in gold in exchange for food,

11 Demetrio Ramos Pérez, *El conflicto de las lanzas jinetas: El primer alzamiento en tierra americana, durante el segundo viaje colombino* (Santo Domingo, 1982) pp. 106ff and Troy S. Floyd, *The Columbus Dynasty in the Caribbean, 1492-1526* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), pp. 16-17.

12 Pedro Borges, *¿Quién era Bartolomé de las Casas?*, (Rialta: Madrid, 1990), pp. 22-23.

which now had become more precious to the settlers.¹³ Guarionex, the chief of the populous area surrounding Concepción de la Vega whom Columbus had hoped to baptize, threw in his lot with Roldán. These sad years of trial, treason and despair led to the martyrdom of the first native converts.

III

Fray Ramón Pané was an unordained Hieronymite lay brother from Catalonia who had come to the colony as a catechist. He began his remarkable pastoral experience after almost a year on the island of Española, having accompanied the garrison under Artiaga to Magdalena in the spring of 1494. Although he had intentions of returning to Spain with Father Boyl in September of 1495, Commander Artiaga sent him into the Taíno village near Magdalena in an area the Indians called Macorix, which was ruled by a minor cacique named Guanáoboconel.¹⁴ As recognition of the social importance of this emissary of Columbus, the chief assigned Pané several *naborias*, or servants, to attend to his physical needs. In his first year at Magdalena, Pané began the work of catechesis among the Taínos who lived outside the stockade and his contacts with the natives helped him become the first Christian missionary to learn an American language.¹⁵

Because Columbus needed some evidence that his enterprise would eventually enlist chiefs as Christianizers of their own people, he decided to attempt an alliance with the natives. Following the medieval tactic of a marriage treaty, he offered one of the Christianized Taínos taken to Spain from the Lucayo Islands on the first voyage of 1492 as husband to a daughter of Guarionex, the major chieftain of the Cibao region and whose rule had been shaken by Spanish victory at La Vega on March 24, 1495. Because similar marriage alliances had brought pacification to Gran Canaria, Columbus mistakenly hoped that such a marriage would lead to the baptism of this paramount cacique, thus helping to subdue the natives.

For the task of converting Guarionex, in early April of 1495 Columbus turned to Ramón Pané. Pané says that he and his best catechumen from Macorix, Guaticabanú, went to Isabela and waited for Columbus to instruct them personally, before proceeding to the village in Cibao ruled by Guarionex. The natives from Magdalena spoke both the language of Macorix and of Cibao, the latter being a

¹³ Las Casas, *op. cit.*, I: 105; see Herman J. Viola and Carolyn Margolis, eds. *Seeds of Change* (Washington, 1991), pp. 43ff.

¹⁴ Ramón Pané, *Relación acerca de las antigüedades de los indios*, (José Juan Arrom, ed. (Mexico: Siglo XXI, 1974), p. 48; the historical materials are in Chapters Twenty-Five and Twenty-Six, pp. 47-56.

¹⁵ Arrom in Pané, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

more widely dispersed dialect in Española.¹⁶ Guaticabanú, the eldest of the brothers assigned as a *naborí* to Pané, was brought from the village of Guanáoboconel in Macorix to that of Guarionex in Cibao because he could translate the tenets of the faith taught by Pané into the popular dialect. This was the practice in the Canaries where Antón the Guanche had served as just such a native catechist.

Pané and Guaticabanú lived in the village of Guarionex for almost two years, or until the early Spring of 1497. During that time, Pané wrote twenty-four chapters of his book, *Antiquities of the Indians*, which is a detailed description of Taíno belief and practices by someone who lived among them. The corpus of the book is focused on the myths of creation, of the invention of fire, of puberty rites, of divination and of healing, as well as explanations of the *cemies* or spirits of Taíno religion. This text of about 2,400 words is considered today a reliable eyewitness account of the Taíno religion and culture.¹⁷ Before handing over the report to Columbus upon his return from Spain in August of 1498, Pané had added two chapters of historical narrative. These chapters begin with a description of a vision by Cáicihu, the father of the cacique, Guarionex. In the vision, the old man prophesied the coming of invaders who would displace the Taínos. Pané says that the Indians originally believed the invaders would be other Indians, called Caribs and confused with cannibals. But, says Pané, the Taínos came to the conclusion that the invaders were the Spaniards. The baptism and martyrdom of Guaticabanú were also appended to these final chapters.

As reported by Pané, the baptism of Guaticabanú, the first native convert to Christianity in America, took place on September 21, 1496, probably near the village of Guarionex in the Cibao of the present day Dominican Republic. The new Christian took the name "Juan," adding "Mateo" in honor of St. Matthew, whose feast day it was. Pané also brought to Christianity seven others from Macorix, including Juan Mateo's brother who was baptized "Antón." As an unordained catechist, it is unlikely that Pané himself performed the rituals,¹⁸ but there were no priests in Española in 1496. Pané's mention of Friar Juan de Borgoña, i.e. de Deule¹⁹ suggests that it was the Franciscan lay brother who administered the sacrament of initiation.

The baptism of Guaticabanú fit the Canarian pattern where piety and faith

16 Pané, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

17 Antonio M. Stevens-Arroyo, *Cave of the Jagua: The Mythological World of the Taínos* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993).

18 cf. Pedro Borges, *Misión y civilización en América* (Madrid, 1987), pp. 15, 20.

19 Pané, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

were more important than learning.²⁰ Pané had placed some Christian statues in an Indian hut making it an oratory or *ermita*, so that the seven new catechumens from Guarionex' village would have a place to "kneel and pray and be consoled." Guarionex ordered the construction of a thatched hut or *bohío* in his village alongside the one containing the statues, so that the converts from Macorix including the mother of Guaticabanú, had a place to live. Guarionex himself learned the Our Father, Hail Mary and Creed, reciting them three times daily.²¹

But when Guarionex said he was no longer interested in baptism, Pané and his companion from Macorix left for another village in Cibao under the cacique, Mahubiatfbere.²² Pané's departure took place in the planting season of 1497, possibly in the middle of April. This was the fateful year of Columbus' presence and of Roldan's revolt. But Pané mentions no intrigue from Spanish sources, attributing Guarionex's change of mind entirely to influence from Taíno caciques. Two days after Pané and his party had left the village, Guarionex sent six of his men to the oratory to take the images from the seven male catechumens of his village who had not left with Pané. Refused entry, the men of Guarionex took the statues by force. Shattering the images into pieces and covering them over with soil in a planting field, Guarionex' men urinated on them. Urination over religious artefacts was a ritual the Taínos performed with their own sacred images or *cemíes*. We know Pané recognized that the Taínos were treating the Christian statues as parts of their own religion, because he cites the ritual incantation for fertility when the deed was done, "Now your fruits will be good and abundant."²³

The youths who had been overpowered told the older catechumens what had happened, who in turn fled some sixty-five miles south to the fort near the Ozama River, where they related the events to Bartolomé Columbus. The Admiral's brother sought out the six perpetrators and burned them at the stake, a punishment usually reserved to heretics. The result, however, seems to have been the opposite of his expectation. Guarionex plotted to assassinate the Taíno Christians on the day on which the tribute in gold was handed over, but the conspiracy was uncovered before it could be accomplished. The resolve by Guarionex to punish the Christianized Taínos continued, however, and Guaticabanú and his family were killed in ambush.

It is not clear why Guaticabanú had not remained with Pané in the village of Mahubiatfbere. But because ambush on the trails between settlements was a

20 Eduardo Aznar Vallejo, "Religiosidad popular en los orígenes del Obispado de Canarias," *VII Coloquio de Historia Canario-Americana*, 1986, pp. 220-234.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 51.

23 Pané, *op. cit.*, ftn. 155; cf. José Juan Arrom, *Mitología y artes prehispánicas de las Antillas* (Mexico, 1975), pp. 112-115.

tactic of Taíno warfare,²⁴ it is likely that the martyrdom occurred while Guaticabanú traveled between the village where he worked with Pané and the village where his mother and kin resided. We have no secure information when the murders took place, or even if they occurred all at once, but I would suggest a date between the planting in April of 1497 and February of 1498, before the arrival of the ships from Spain. The account of the martyrdom appears to be the testimony of an eyewitness, perhaps part of an extracted confession from one of the perpetrators.

Pané tells us that when the mother of Guarionex went to harvest the *ajes* (a type of sweet potato) that had been planted where the broken statues had been buried, she discovered that the stalks had grown in the form of a cross. Pané says this woman was hostile to evangelization, but that even she recognized this cruciform as a miracle.²⁵

Pané begins the historical narrative of the last two chapters with a miracle: the prophetic vision of invaders by Cáicihu, and ends with a miracle: the growth of the *ajes* in the form of a cross. Pané cites Captain Ayala testifying, "This miracle has been made manifest by God where the images were found, God knows why."²⁶ Thus the medieval perception that conversion was accompanied by miracles is repeated as a coda at the beginning and the end of the historical narrative, with an eye-witness testimony similar to that of the Roman centurion at the crucifixion.²⁷ It is also a literary device to place the Christian epiphany in the same site of "pagan" perfidy. The *aje* stalks grow where the broken statues had been buried just as, for instance, Our Lady of Guadalupe in Spain bears the Arab name of the river where the virgin appeared predicting the discovery of a long-hidden statue.²⁸ These stylistic elements suggest that Pané wrote in the manner of a medieval history of conversion, seeking to establish the basis for a legend of divine approval upon the enterprise.

Pané's missionary activities from 1493 until the arrival of the Franciscans in 1502 produced converts, catechists and martyrs. Nor were these sixteen the only Taíno converts, since Pané states that "many more are Christian now," presumably in August of 1498, when he completed his manuscript.²⁹ Pané never says he sought to change Taíno culture before baptizing Guaticabanú or his family.

24 Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, 1986 "Warfare Among the Taínos from the Defeat of Caonabó to the Victory of Enriquillo", 1st International Conference on the Dominican Republic, Rutgers University (Newark), April 11, 1986. (Typewritten).

25 Pané, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 54.

27 Mark 15:39.

28 William Christian, Jr. *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton, 1981), pp. 88-93.

29 Pané, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

nowhere does he complain of Indian nakedness, while in contrast the Franciscan Morf after 1502 complained loudly of such nakedness and insisted upon clothes for the baptized.³⁰ This simple catechist emphasized love of the Gospel in his evangelization and did not impose European culture as a condition for baptism. His narration offers an example of Christian fraternity that was exceptional between Europeans and natives. "And God in His goodness gave me for companionship the best of the Indians, and the best informed in the holy Catholic faith, and later He took him from me. Praised be God who gave him to me and taken took him from me! Truly, I held him as a good son and brother. This was Guaticabanú, who later became a Christian and was named Juan."³¹

In my opinion, the efforts of the humble lay brother, Ramón Pané, mark the beginnings of true evangelization in the Americas.

IV

Writing nearly a half century after the events, Bartolomé Las Casas gives only grudging recognition to Pané's efforts. But on the crucial issue of the martyrdom, he contradicts Pané alleging that the Taínos would not have killed the converts for holding to the faith.³² In his explanation, Las Casas removes theonus for the killings from Guarionex in order to place it on the converts for associating with the Spaniards. He even suggests that the assassins had reason to suspect the converts of betrayal of their own people, which would mean that the murders constituted legitimate vengeance upon traitors. The single concession that Las Casas makes to the martyrs is to admit that because they called upon God, the converts might have been pardoned in heaven for collusion with Spaniards on earth.³³

Apparently, Las Casas was more worried about the negative judgment that would fall upon the Taíno executioners than about the esteem that might be given to the Taíno converts. Was Las Casas justified in downplaying the theological capacity of the Taíno martyrs? Was it rejection of their Taíno identity to cling to the Gospel? Las Casas' suggestion that the murders were political reprisals taken by the Taínos against their own kind who collaborated with the Spaniards does not make sense, however. Guarionex was himself allied with Roldán, so why would the martyrs' fidelity to Pané have been viewed as strange behavior? Moreover, one

30 Borges, *Misión y civilización*, p. 186 et passim; Stevens-Arroyo, "The Inter-Atlantic Paradigm," pp. 535-537.

31 Pané, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

32 Las Casas, *Apologética*, Ch. 120, as cited by Arrom in Pané, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

33 Idem. "Pero no los mataban por aquello [la fe], porque nunca indios algunos tal hicieron, sino porque vivían con los españoles, o los loaban, o defendían a quien todos tanto desamaban, o porque quizá les hacían aquellos indios por mandado de los españoles algún daño, como habemos visto de esto harto. Y en estos casos harta merced les hizo Dios si por confesar ser sus siervos se salvaron."

must take into account the purposes of Las Casas' writings.³⁴

The theological interpretation of the baptism and martyrdom must be built upon a decoding of Taíno social structures.³⁵ The Taínos understood the relationship of *naborí* to master, or *nitaino*, as subordination within kinship structures. No one could be socially important without servants, which is why Pané had been awarded *naborias* by each of the caciques in whose village he resided. But this servant-master relationship was also tied to other complex codes of kinship relations such as avunculocality (residence in the village of one's mother's brother). When Pané departed the village of Guarionex for that of Mahubiatibire, it seems he took only Guaticabanú with him. Left behind was the family of *naborias* from Macorix not native to that village, and the catechumens from Guarionex' own realm. As I interpret Taíno custom, since Pané -- their lord -- was now absent, the *naborias* fell under the jurisdiction of the paramount chieftain Guarionex. The cacique probably thought he had been more than generous by building the catechumens a hut in which to reside. But with the arrival of planting season, the Christianized Taínos were expected to work the fields of Guarionex, who wanted to plant his crops using the spiritual artifacts of Pané to insure fertility.

I doubt the Christian *naborias* protested treating the statues as *cemies*: rather, Guarionex' usurpation of the possessions of Pané caused the objections. The would-be converts may have sensed that the Christian images were not intended for fertility rites, since Pané had not treated them in this way in previous planting seasons. But their resistance to the tribesmen of Guarionex raised a question of authority. Even though the Catalán catechist was no longer present in their village, these Taínos remained faithful to Pané, refusing obedience to the new cacique. This represented a rupture with Taíno custom. Carried to a logical conclusion, it meant that no cacique was secure in his power because conversion of *naborias* meant an absolute loss of cacical authority. The behavior by the Christianized Taínos was reprehensible to native society because it disrupted the harmony between earthly authority and cosmic forces. Thus Guarionex ordered the execution of Guaticabanú and his kin for much the same reasons Roman Emperors had killed Christians: refusal to worship in the traditional religion constituted treason against public authority.

Moreover, Guaticabanú's testimony at the moment of his martyrdom shows that the conversion was indeed a religious transformation. If initially the acceptance of the Gospel was only the loyalty due his master, the embrace of death was an act of faith. "*Dios naborí daca*. (I am a *naborí* of God.)", he said. Significantly, he did not say he was a *naborí* of Pané. Juan Mateo Guaticabanú had

³⁴ See the forthcoming article in the *Catholic Historical Review*.

³⁵ See Cave of the Jagua; Samuel M. Wilson, *Hispanola: Caribbean Chiefdoms in the Age of Columbus*, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990) and William F. Keegan, *The People Who Discovered Columbus: The Prehistory of the Bahamas* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992).

come to recognize that by his baptism he had been freed of subservience to his old masters. Importantly, he also saw that baptism did not simply place him under new lords, now Christian, but no less absolute. Because of Pané's catechesis, Juan Mateo had come to see that his only master was God in heaven, and that his obedience was due only to the divine. It is not far from the biblical experience of Peter and the apostles who proclaimed to Jewish leaders, "We must obey God rather than men!"³⁶ In this light, Guaticabanú's profession of faith was as much a repudiation of the Spanish practice of *encomienda*, or serfdom of the Indians under Spanish lords, as it was of the Taíno system under the caciques.

The world today knows Las Casas much better than it knows Pané; the Mexican native, Juan Diego has been beatified, while the Taíno Juan Mateo Guaticabanú languishes in obscurity. During the past century, there has been more interest in canonizing Columbus, the slave trader, than in raising the first American martyr to the honors of the altar. But as long as history has meaning and truth is honored, Juan Mateo Guaticabanú will remain the first American convert and this hemisphere's proto-martyr for Christianity.

Resumen

El argumento del presente artículo es que, sin negar las atrocidades cometidas por los europeos ni el intento de convertir a los nativos de estas tierras mediante el uso de la fuerza, hay que recordar que sí hubo conversiones voluntarias y profundas. Una de ellas (quizá la primera) fue la de Juan Mateo Guaticabanú, taíno natural de La Española, quien murió como mártir. Además, Guaticabanú es digno de recuerdo, pues su bautismo el 21 de septiembre de 1496 marca el primer bautismo entre los nativos de este hemisferio. De paso, el artículo también compara lo relatado por Ramón Pané con lo que cuenta Las Casas acerca de la muerte de Guaticabanú y sus compañeros. Pané la ve como un martirio, mientras Las Casas, quizá por absolver a los taínos a quienes quiere defender, la atribuye a razones políticas.

³⁶ Acts 5:29.

The Role of the Barrio in the Doctrine of Original Sin

Miguel A. De La Torre

Sin opposes God's benevolent purposes for creation and is responsible for the enslavement of the human race and the corruption of God's created order. This form of enslavement opposes the fundamental message of liberation found within the Gospel. The liberation that is found in Christ is displaced by domination of one's own transgressions or through the sins of others. The essence of sin is idolatry, striving to supplant the Creator with something or someone else. This displacement can be voluntary, as when individuals exchange the glory of God for money. However, God can also be deposed involuntarily, as in the case of structural mechanisms which foster the subjugation of the many to the privileged few. Sin, universally manifested individually and/or corporately, is such an inherent feature of the human condition that theologians constructed the doctrine of original sin to argue its innateness. According to this doctrine, we are all born with a "stain" upon our soul, fostering an individualistic need for divine atonement.

The concept of original sin became passé with the rise of the Age of Enlightenment. The rationalist distaste for the supernatural (i.e., the creation story), eclipsed the doctrine of original sin, rendering it obsolete, and relegating it to periphery reinterpretations. Sin was transformed to a disease in need of therapy or a crime in need of civil punishment. Postmodernity has deconstructed the doctrine of original sin to a needless anomaly, lacking reparation for wrongdoing or atonement. This paper attempts to reconceptualize the doctrine of original sin as it pertains to the economic oppression of Hispanics in this country.

The tenet of original sin does not explicitly appear in the biblical text. However, the accounts of the Fall (Gen. 3) and the story of intercourse between human women and celestial creatures (Gen. 6:1-4) provide tacit substance for speculation on the provenance of sin. The Babylonian Captivity served as a catalyst for the inception of this doctrine. During this epoch, Hebrew thought was exposed to Persian ideology, specifically the prevalent dualism of good versus evil and the personification of evil in Satan. The post-exilic period saw the emergence of two theories concerning the fundamental origin of sin. Many linked this origin to some outside diabolic force that coerced its way into the human condition (ie: Satan). Others believed that sin was inherited, creating a lifelong struggle for dominance between our corrupt nature and our desire to do good.

After the Christ event, the Apostolic Fathers barely mentioned the notion

of original sin. Eventually Justin alleged a corporate conception of sin.¹ The precursor and developer of the thesis that Adam's soul was linked to those of his progeny was Tertullian. He maintained that all souls were contained in the original soul breathed into Adam from God. These souls are stained due to Adam's primeval sin.² This doctrine, known as traducianism, becomes the harbinger for our modern idea of original sin. However, Tertullian asserts a firm belief in free will.³ A separation with Adam's culpability is maintained, thus implying, as did Justin, that original sin can be transmitted through society.⁴

Eastern Greeks advocated a more optimistic outlook. They contended that sin was rooted in free will, located within the created intellect's freedom and not some autonomous negative principle.⁵ Original sin is but a wound inflicted on our nature. Only in a mystical sense do we share in the subversive act of Adam.⁶ Sin is contracted through paternal transmission, with copulating being the means,⁷ thus anteceding Augustinian's formulation of original sin.

Pelagius, the British monk, fully developed the nexus or lack thereof between Adam's first sin and the correlation and that of his posterity. Realizing the pessimistic effect that a negative view of human nature had on moral behavior, Pelagius proposed a paradigm to counteract these tendencies. He rejected any propensity toward sin by heavily emphasizing the notion of free will liberated from the influences of the universe and the Fall.⁸

Augustine of Hippo impugns Pelagius by stating that, "all sinned, since all were that one man [Adam]."⁹ Sin is transmitted through the theory of 'seminal propagation'. Within the father's semen exists a generic spiritual substance (fomes peccatum) which is generationally transferred. While prior theologians emphasized a solidarity with Adam, Augustine formulated a doctrine of peccatum originale that graphically depicted humanity's complicity with Adam's rebellion.

The cornerstone of Augustine's biblical defense is Ro. 5:12b which he

1 *First Apology*, 61.10.

2 *De test. animae*, 39.

3 *Adversus Marcionem* 2.6

4 *De Spectaculis*, 2.

5 Basil, *Hom.* 8.3; Gregory of Nyssa, *Or. Cat.*, 7; Chrysostom, *Gen. Hom.*, 19.1; 20.3.

6 Gregory of Nyssa, *De Beat. Or.*, 6.

7 Gregory of Nyssa, *C. Manich.*, 8.

8 Robert F. Evans, *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals* (New York: Seabury, 1968), pp. 82-83.

9 Augustine, *On the Merits and Remission of Sins*, 1.10.11.

interprets as 'in whom all sinned'. Because we are 'in Adam', his sin is in us as well.¹⁰ However, Augustine relied on the old Latin versions of the New Testament that prevailed prior to Jerome's Vulgate. Unfortunately, ἐφ' ᾧ which is translated as 'because' was instead equated with the Latin word, 'in whom'. Consequently, Augustine misreads the phrase that should have been rendered 'because all sinned'.

Despite this misinterpretation, Pope Zosimus in his *Epistula tractoria* presented at the Council of Carthage (418) proscribed Pelagianism in unequivocal terms. Later, Pope Gregory (590-604) designated Augustine as an infallible teacher of the Christian faith, ensuring the prominence of his doctrine of original sin in the Western World. As a partial response to the Protestant Reformation, the fifth session of the Council of Trent reaffirmed the reality of original sin, its transmission from Adam, and its consequence to the body and soul.

The actions of Popes Zosimus and Gregory demonstrated how political power was responsible for the creation of religious doctrine of original sin. By using Asad's paradigm,¹¹ we note that it was they who exercised their stations as Popes to ensure that Augustine's doctrine prevailed. Through their position as God's representatives on earth, they were able to exert the necessary, disciplinary procedures within the power context of the hierarchy to dictate 'truth'. The 'authorized truth' of original sin was enforced through the coercive conditions that existed, and preserved through authorized chastisement. Succinctly stated, the doctrine of original sin became a reality when the power of the Pope intersected with the knowledge created by the early church theologians.

This ideology motivated the populace to act in certain ways that validated the supremacy of the Pope and church. It became crucial that the authorized church fostered this doctrine, for it insured the church's preeminence. If all humanity was born with a stain upon their individual souls whose consequence was eternal damnation, then the church, who controlled the only means for redemption, had unassailable power. By withholding the sacraments, the powers of contemporary sovereigns were usurped. Augustine's doctrine of original sin contributed to the theological justification of the laity's domination by the ecclesiastic power structure, thus exchanging the liberation found in Christ for the oppression caused by the church. If any activity, teaching, or doctrine contradicts the liberating truth of the Gospel then it is heretical. Thus, it must be concluded that the doctrine of original sin as presented in the traditionist view was also heretical.

10 Augustine, *Ibid.*, 3.14.

11 Talad Asad, "Anthropological Conceptions of Religion: Reflections on Geertz," in *Man: The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 83, (1983), pp. 237-59.

Among Protestants, Calvin continued within Augustine's tradition by solidifying the connection of Adam's sin with all of his descendants. Whereas Pelagius's God imputes neither a corrupt nature nor guilt to the human creature, Calvin's God imputes both, based on a literal understanding of Ro. 5:12-19. Original sin is "a hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused into all parts of the soul, which first makes us liable to God's wrath, then also brings forth in us what Scripture calls 'works of the flesh.'"¹² Capitalism, the social counterpart of Calvinist theology, reflects the station in life of the individual, and the unequal distribution of the world's goods as special dispensations from God. Faithfulness to one's social position, regardless of the economic distress caused, is highly pleasing to God.¹³ God predestinated that Hispanics in this country be born in the socio-economic oppression of the barrio.

All theologies are rooted in prior political commitments and thoughts. Even an 'impartial' reading of the biblical text is understood by the reader within her/his socio-economic setting. It would be naive to believe that the biblical text can be applied to human realities immune of the ideological tendencies and struggles of the theologian's day. These early theologians constructed their theology from the station of their definite cultures and traditions. Their theology was an outgrowth of their subjective understanding of God, based on their experience and socio-historical location. Their theology was apt to mirror more information about who they were than about who God is. The questions and discussions raised by the Church Fathers are important today, and crucial in their particular space and time. Nevertheless, their conclusions are inadequate in dealing with the issues that face humanity in the twenty-first century. For this reason, it is important to revisit the biblical text with modern eyes capable of questioning the traditional interpretations of the Scriptures.

The major text utilized in the formation of a doctrine of original sin has been Ro. 5:12-19. Yet, when surveyed within the context of the entire epistle, it appears that Paul is less concerned with the issue of the transmission of guilt than he is with the liberating praxis of Christ's redemptive work. Although Paul neglects the origin of evil, he does associate the sinful condition of humanity to Adam's transgression. He grants a causal connection to Adam's first sin and the depravation of humanity. However, death, the result of sin, affects all people 'because all have sinned', not because Adam sinned. One is held culpable for one's own transgressions, not the sins of the father. As Ezekiel (18:2) rhetorically asked, "The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?"

12 John Calvin, *Institutes*, 2.1.8.

13 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by R.H. Tawney (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons), pp. 35, 85, 177-178.

Paul juxtaposes two paradigms in this passage, the subordinate being that Adam initiates sin that leads to judgement, condemnation, and death. The pith of this excerpt is that Jesus the Christ brings grace that leads to forgiveness, justification and life. The establishment of *iglesia* serves as the vehicle by which the grace of the Christ paradigm is transmitted from one generation to the next. Yet, how is sin transmitted? Justin alludes to a corporate nature to sin while Tertullian insinuates that society is guilty of fostering this sin. Both are partially correct. Sin is transmitted generationally through social structures of oppression that perpetually force individuals to toil painfully for their bare existence.

If society can transmit sin, then any institution created by society can naturally convey and amplify sin's perniciousness. The institution liable for this conduct is real property. Land was not created by human hands, but by God; yet humans reconceptualize its utility into a commodity. Once the land becomes a commodity, it is capable of perpetuating domination throughout human history. Land obtained through bloodshed so that the few can subjugate the many becomes the primary substance upon which oppressive social structures and institutions are constructed. Property has been the means by which humans exercise power and authority. The justification for seizing land created a need for ideologies rooted in theology. It is this divinizing process that made property an idol and the essence of original sin.

The full import of land as the means by which original sin is perpetuated began when God cursed the ground immediately after Adam's sin was exposed (Gen 3:17-19). Original sin cannot be confined to a privatized stain upon the soul. The stain is too large to fit on any one soul, and an individual repentance is not enough to remove the stain or its communal consequences. Original sin is as enormous as to encompass the lands of the earth. Instead of a private sin, it manifests itself communally, depicted differently within various social groups according to how that society is constructed.

For purposes of this discussion, private property will refer to real property with both terms (unless otherwise noted) being used interchangeably. Yet the definition of property will not be confined to the soil under one's feet. Property means more than a field or a house. It encompasses the 'claims on' the object. Property becomes liberty over against external powers and/or the means by which one's substance for life is produced and distributed. However, if the lure and promise of property are liberty and security, its threat is domination over the one who has no property, thus no liberty or security.¹⁴

14 M. Douglas Meeks, *God the Economist* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), pp. 99-125.

The primary premise of land, according to the biblical text, is that God is the sole owner. "The land must not be sold permanently, because the land is [God's] and you are but aliens and My tenants" (Lev 25:23). Consequently, the text provides safeguards to prevent land ownership from stratifying the population. The right to maximize the 'highest and best' use of real estate was curtailed by requirements such as disallowing total harvesting of the field. One was not allowed to reap to the very edges of the field or pass through a second time to glean missed produce. The grain that was overlooked remained for the poor and the aliens (Lev 19:9-10). When property was purchased, absolute ownership was not transferred. The land was returned to the original owner in the year of jubilee (Lev 25:13), and if sold due to financial difficulties, the property could be reclaimed (Lev 25:25-28).

Two types of claims can be made on property. The biblical text champions inclusiveness. This pattern of land usage liberates both the individual and society from the perpetual grip of original sin. The land is held in stewardship for God to obtain basic life substance for the owner and his/her neighbors. Property's purpose is to serve the livelihood of all, not to become the means of their subjugation. This is the paradigm that Leviticus established. A paragon of land ownership is also found in the early Christian church where all believers shared their possessions (including their real property) according to each person's needs (Acts 2:44-45).

Diametrically opposed to an inclusive claim on property is our modern Western form of land ownership. Title on property is exclusive, to be used and disposed of unconditionally by the owner. This right appropriates all of the property's resources to the privileged few amassing large tracts of land, to the detriment of those who are unable to secure any. The overflow of unneeded resources becomes excess commodity and a form of domination to those who must barter to obtain bare necessities. A biblical example of the exclusive use of property and how it oppresses the people appears in the Genesis account of Pharaoh's accumulation of all the land at the expense of the Egyptians' economic hardship (Gen 47:20-21). The exclusive claim to property was revised in modernity due to Lockean thought, serving as a fundamental building block for the United States. So innate is the exclusive usage of property, even to the hindrance of others, that it becomes like the law of God. To question the sanctity of private property is to question God and/or one's patriotism.

The privatization of the North American concept of salvation creates an uninformed understanding of corporate sin. Passages that deal with the verdict dispensed on the Day of Judgement to entire societies (i.e.: Lk 10:13-14) appear paradoxical because they chafe North American individualism. Dussel stresses that the denial of God occurs with the deification of self. Once humanity's apotheosis

transpires, injustice becomes perfectly natural.¹⁵ Accordingly, privatized sin fails to cope with structures of oppression. All sins, original and present, become reality within the context of interacting with others. Sin, no matter how solitary, is interconnective and affects those with whom we relate.¹⁶

Gutiérrez articulates this point when he states that "sin is not something that occurs within the sanctuary of the heart. It always translates into interpersonal relationships . . . and hence is the ultimate root of all injustice and oppression."¹⁷

Gutiérrez defines sin as evident within oppressive structures, through situations of injustice and exploitation.¹⁸ How then does sin affect the other? Through some form of domination. The ontological anxiety that is part of the human condition creates an idolatrous pride within the social group. This pride is manifested in one's attempt to be like God, of which the repercussions are depicted through the domination of those who are weaker. Collectively, this is accomplished by how land is controlled.

Dussel presents three origins of property. One either works for it, steals it, or inherits it. If one works for it, the amount of land acquired would be relatively small. If instead much property is owned, then it was stolen, sometimes without one's knowledge. Stealing it causes the other to be impoverished and/or killed. When that property is inherited by one's children, the original sin of stealing and murder is transmitted to the next generation.¹⁹ In the case of the United States' original sin, the avidity for land which led to the genocide of the indigenous population became the first sin from which all other communitarian sins are derived. Institutions, traditions, and history are constructed to perpetuate this original sin.

Laissez-faire economics, as developed by Adam Smith, is an Enlightenment construction on which the principles concerning land ownership in this country are based. Pursuit of economic self-interest within the context of a competitive society will insure the good of all persons being served by, Smith

15 Enrique Dussel, *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation*, trans. by Bernard F. McWilliams (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1974), p. 22.

16 Enrique Dussel, *Ethics and Community*, trans. by Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1986), pp. 20-21.

17 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History*, trans. Robert Barr (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1983) p. 147.

18 Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. by Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1971), p. 103.

19 Dussel, *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation*, p. 25.

argues, an 'invisible hand'.²⁰ No restraints should be placed on the accumulation of land. In fact, one has an obligation to seek profit. Private property becomes sacralized in the ontological constitution of our being through our assimilation to Euro-centric principles. Smith's model creates problems. For example, the dominant class will be in an economic position to acquire immense portions of land. Through their holdings, they can impose laws upon those who need land for basic substances. In exchange for the use of the land, the tenants recognize the supreme authority of the landlord, whether the landowner is an individual, multi-corporation, or political state.

Locke is responsible for the exclusive use of real property in the United States. He advocated that private property was an institution of nature rather than a social convention based on human laws, thus supporting its inclusive claim.²¹ Property should be valued in the same way that life and liberty are regarded. He intimated the right of each person to keep whatever property they possess, despite the means utilized in its acquisition or their ability to use all of its resources. The State, constructed to preserve life, liberty, and property, is duty bound to insure that these inalienable rights not be violated.²² The State became an organization needed by the landholders to guarantee their property and interest.

The sacredness of property is affirmed in the U.S. Constitution. Rather than the traditional right to property being derived from the power to rule, this country inverted this concept to reflect a right to rule in order to protect said property. The major landholders, Jefferson, Adams, Hamilton, Madison, Washington, etc. viewed government's primary reason for existence as the protector of property, specifically their holdings.²³ Land equality became a seditious idea to be quashed because it created the possibility that the wealthy might lose their privilege within the establishing plutocracy. Through their economic positions, they controlled all aspect of political life. The interests of the common person were subordinated to the interest of this ruling class. To question the ruling class, as did the Loyalist, was paramount to treason.

20 Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, (1776; reprint ed., New York: Modern Library, 1937).

21 John Locke, *The Second Treatise of Government*, Thomas P. Peardon, ed. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Educational Publishing, 1952), p. 17.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 17-30. It is interesting to note that the early draft of the American Declaration of Independence called for "the right to life, liberty and property." However, this was changed because this country's forefathers feared that all who fought in the Revolutionary War would make some sort of claim for land.

23 James Madison, *The Federalist Papers*, #10 "[If property owners rule then] a rage for paper money, for an abolition of debts, for an equal division of property, or for any other improper or wicked project, will be less apt to pervade the whole body of the Union . . ."

Marx, on the other hand, specifically called for the abolition of private property and the application of all rents for public purposes.²⁴ Positive humanism can only come into being with the annulment of property.²⁵ The process of accumulating as much private property (Marx uses the term money) as possible makes it the object of eminent possession. Its universality is its omnipotence, functioning as an almighty being.²⁶ Marx calls for the abolition of private property as a form of emancipation from the few, who through the State control the destiny of the proletariat.

Marxism and laissez-faire economics are products of the Enlightenment. While capitalists idolize wealth obtained through economic efficiency, Marxists view economic forces as the ultimate historical causal factor. Both systems fall short of biblical principles, and it is blasphemous to espouse either of them as ideal Christian economic principles. Biblical Christianity must transcend the economic systems designed by humanity.

Unlike Marx, Esquivel, the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, does not call for the abolition of land ownership, but rather the distribution of land ownership according to needs. He challenges the notion that land title obtained through purchase is more legitimate than a property right earned through need and toil. The ones who work the land for their sustenance hold nobler title than the patron who "never sowed a solitary seed."²⁷ Dussel agrees by stating that all have a natural right to whatever is required to live, be it calories, clothing, housing, etc. It is the excess of unjust accumulation of real property that subjugates those who have none.²⁸ This is in line with the biblical messianic dream found in Isaiah (65:21-22), "They will build houses and dwell in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. No longer will they build houses and others live in them, or plant and others eat."

Within the United States, land usage oppresses Hispanic-Americans. The physical land space called the barrio becomes the means of subjugation. The marginalization of Hispanic-Americans reflects the same dynamic process that has reshaped the post-colonial world. The essential paradigm of the center exploiting

24 Karl Marx, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 490, 505.

25 Karl Marx, "Phenomenology," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, pp. 120-121.

26 Karl Marx, "The Power of Money in Bourgeois Society," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, p. 102.

27 Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, *Christ in a Poncho*, trans by Robert R. Barr (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1981), p. 99.

28 Dussel, *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation*, p 50. It is important to note that Dussel views private property as an offshoot of original sin which for him is colonial domination. I maintain that it was the avarice for land and its resources that lead to colonial domination, thus making it the offshoot, and land accumulation the original sin.

the periphery is not limited to the international sphere. For the U.S. economy to function at top efficiency for the center, a periphery people must exist. Their existence is relegated to a separate area of town. Rio, Texas profits by the surplus extracted from the enclosing Mexican shanty towns; Los Angeles subsists by utilizing so-called illegal immigrants; and Miami develops by exploiting the *Souwesera* (nickname for Miami's barrio). The penthouses on Park Avenue must preserve their privileged space at whatever cost from the menace of Spanish Harlem, while simultaneously capitalizing upon this marginalized space. We Hispanics, living in the barrio, are these needed periphery people who are economically expendable. Our function in the United States is to enrich the center.

In spite of George Bush's 'gentler and kinder' society, Hispanics are ravaged by the forces of what Pope John Paul II calls 'savage capitalism'. In 1973, 2.4 million Hispanics lived in poverty. By 1983 this figure increased to 4.2 million, and by 1990, the figure again rose to more than six million. The median net worth of Hispanics was \$5,345 as opposed to the Anglo net worth of \$44,408.²⁹ The rate of increase in poverty is higher among Hispanics than any other racial or ethnic group living in this country. From this underside of capitalism, Hispanic theology attempts to construct an eschatological hope where no hope exists.

For the dominant culture, the reality of the barrio serves the vested interest of the ruling class. The post-World War II generation considers opportunity and prosperity to be their birthrights. The Hispanic who is able to overcome the obstacles designed to keep her/him in the barrio becomes proof that opportunities do exist and are available to those who would simply work. Like the paraded fatted calf, this Hispanic, representing a statistically insignificant group, is held up to prove that anyone who is willing to adopt the 'Protestant work ethic' can move beyond the barrio. Their success validates the government's social contract with its inhabitants that insure anyone can be upwardly mobile. Once the government is unable to deliver on this promise, it loses its legitimization.

Since the 1970's, the government has been unable to preserve the myth that anyone in this country who simply 'puts his nose to the grindstone' will be able to climb the economic ladder. The average family income in real dollars (income adjusted for inflation) has dropped in growth from 37% during the 1950's to 4% during the 1980's. The median family income in 1973 to 1993 dropped by \$1,000. The wealthy fared better. The top 1% of households controlled 40% of the

29 "Report from the U.S. Minorities" in *Third World Theologies: Commonalities & Divergences*, K.C. Abraham, ed., pp. 86-87; and U.S. Bureau of Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-20, #455, *The Hispanic Population in the United States*, March, 1991, p. 8.

nation's wealth, up from 34% in 1973. During the 80's, 75% of income growth and 100% of wealth increases went to the richest 20% of the population, while the poorest 20% of the population experienced a 1% drop per year in real dollars.³⁰ Since the end of World War II until the 1970's the median family income has been rising, peaking in 1973. For the last two decades, however, the average American has been economically frozen.

The middle class becomes the buffer zone between those in poverty living in the barrio and the wealthiest living in the exclusive suburbs. Marx's failure to analyze the middle class creates an 'empty space' in his theory. The middle class, in effect, is a contradictory class. In one way, they are similar to the poor who are excluded from the means of production, yet their interests are opposed to the workers based on their managerial positions within the corporate organization. They occupy contradictory locations within exploitation relations. Although materially comfortable, they remain bound up with property relations and the associated processes of exploitation.³¹ The excessive profits of the ruling class make it possible to 'bribe' this contradictory middle class into maintaining the status quo, strengthening the marginalization of Hispanics.

However, the restructuring of global capitalism is creating a middle class susceptible to unemployment, underemployment and low wages. Individuals denied employment at IBM or who lose jobs at AT&T due to downsizing are not poorly educated Hispanics. These are the predominantly non-Hispanic white middle class with college degrees, years of experience, and seemingly impeccable credentials. The danger arising from a downwardly mobile middle class is the blurring of the barriers that separate them from the Hispanic (and/or African-Americans). Not surprisingly, fury soon replaces the hope of the now doomed upwardly mobile. Affirmative Action and minorities are blamed for these economic conditions, best illustrated in the 1995 Glass Ceiling Commission which studied demographics in the U.S. workplace. In spite of the fact that 95% of all top corporate positions are filled by white-Anglo males, the commission reported that 'many middle and upper-level white male managers view the inclusion of minorities and women in management as a direct threat to their own chances for advancement'. The function of the barrio is to accentuate the separation of the middle class from the poor. The middle class can take comfort in knowing that "things may be economically bad, but at least we don't live in the barrio."

Hispanics are kept in the barrio through the normative gaze of the

30 These figures are furnished by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics and appeared in Cardinal Roger Mahony's, "Prosperity - but not for all," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 29, 1995.

31 Erik Olin Wright, *Classes* (London: Verso, 1985), pp. 87, 285-286.

dominant group, which institutionalizes how Hispanics are seen. As a social construct, the normative gaze effectively causes Hispanics to remain within their assigned land space. Seeing is a mode of thinking wherein Hispanics are transformed into an Object which can be possessed. Through the roving eye of the dominant group, Hispanics as Objects are constantly being sized up, defined, appropriated, and controlled. How the normative gaze functions is best illustrated through Foucault's well known illustration of Bentham's Panopticon.

Panopticon is a prison, where the individually inhabited cells are located in an annular building facing the central guard tower. Through backlighting, the guard is able to see each solitary convict without being seen. The gaze of the guard confers power while becoming a trap to the ones being observed, even when surveillance is not constant. The mere possibility of being watched forces the Object to internalize the power relation. The Object's state of consciousness is altered to accept the role of bearing its own oppression. In Foucault's own words:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. By this very fact, the external power may throw off its physical weight; it tends to the non-corporal; and, the more it approaches this limit, the more constant, profound and permanent are its effects.³²

Neither physical violence nor forced segregation is needed to keep the Hispanic in the barrio. Through the normative gaze, reality is constructed to prove that Hispanics belong in their assigned land space, and to live anywhere else would simply be unnatural. We are taught not to trust our own eyes but to view ourselves through the eyes of the dominant culture. Their reality becomes universal, and we accept it as truth. Impotent and blind to causes of our condition, we fatalistically accept our place in the barrio.

Being kept in the barrio produces apathy and ignorance. Rather than being empowered to perceive the realities of our world, we are maintained in what Freire calls 'submerged' consciousness – unable to see the interests of our oppressors whose image we have internalized.

Taught to accept that our repression is due to some inherent flaw, we look toward the cause of our oppression for redemption. An irresistible attraction develops toward the dominant culture. Although alienated, we want to be accepted by them, so we

32 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. by Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977), pp. 200-203.

aspire to imitate and follow, while those very attempts to Anglicize ourselves are viewed as facetious at best, pathetic at worst. However, rather than becoming what we are not, Hispanic Christianity labors to achieve *conscientização* by taking action against the oppressive components of reality and learning to see for ourselves the historical, economic, social, and political contractions that exist within the dominant culture.³³

Throughout this essay, original sin was exhibited as transmittable through a communal system rather than the act of copulation. The U.S.'s original sin is its insatiable thirst for real estate. This sin continues today by creating a barrio which effectively capitalizes on Hispanics for the purpose of enriching the dominant culture. Liberation from the oppressive usage of property requires radical changes, changes that are political in nature. Political policies need to be developed which challenge this country's sin, by confronting how real estate is manipulated. The goal, as articulated by Gutiérrez, is more than just devising a better living condition, a radical change in political structures, or a social revolution. The goal is a "continuous creation, never ending, of a new way to be a [person], a permanent cultural revolution."³⁴ It becomes the responsibility of those who are called Christ's disciples to struggle toward social transformation despite insurmountable odds. We are called to "hope against all hope."

Resumen

El postmodernismo ha desconstruido la doctrina del pecado original reduciéndola a una anomalía, ya que carece de formas adecuadas para tratar con la maldad y la expiación. Se empleará una hermenéutica bíblica hispánica para reconstruir la doctrina del pecado original en cuanto a su relación al barrio. Este trabajo examinará primero la visión tradicional que concierne a esta doctrina. Luego considera las implicaciones hermenéuticas de la doctrina. Esta sección demuestra cómo el pecado original se traspasa generacionalmente por medio de los bienes raíces. Finalmente, se exploran las ramificaciones políticas del barrio. La opresión económica de los hispanos se vuelve una función necesaria en este país para que el grupo dominante mantenga sus privilegios.

33 Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 1994), pp: 12, 17, 44-46.

34 Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, p. 32.

Reseña Bibliográfica

Caminemos con Jesús; Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment. Roberto S. Goizueta. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995. pp. 224. Rústica.

Pablo A. Jiménez

A través de sus numerosos escritos, Roberto S. Goizueta ha mostrado su extraordinaria capacidad para tratar asuntos metodológicos ligados a la teología hispana. En *Caminemos con Jesús; Toward a Hispanic/Latino Theology of Accompaniment*, Goizueta muestra una vez más su habilidad para la reflexión teológica mientras examina la pregunta central del libro: ¿Cómo podremos--como personas latinas en los Estados Unidos--articular una teología basada en nuestra experiencia histórica? (p. ix).

Los siete capítulos del libro están organizados en forma de un “círculo hermenéutico”. El primero establece la ubicación social--tanto del autor como del pueblo hispano--como el punto de partida para la empresa teológica. Este capítulo, por estar dedicado a explorar el contexto social del cual parte la reflexión teológica hispana, contiene varios elementos autobiográficos.

El segundo avanza el análisis del primero, explorando dos elementos centrales a la ubicación social del pueblo hispano: La religiosidad popular católica y los símbolos, narrativas y rituales que ésta emplea. En este punto debemos aclarar que Goizueta esboza su teología desde una perspectiva católica. La pregunta central que explora este capítulo es: ¿Cuál es el contexto socio-histórico particular en el cual las personas católicas hispanas hacen su teología? (p. 18). Por eso es que, al hablar de la religiosidad popular, Goizueta toma como ejemplos--o más bien como paradigmas--la celebración de la Semana Santa en la Catedral de San Fernando en la Ciudad de San Antonio y la devoción a la Virgen de la Guadalupe.

Los capítulos centrales del libro están dedicados a esbozar una antropología teológica hispana. El tercero describe el perfil de la persona hispana, según ha sido forjado por los valores y las celebraciones de la religiosidad popular. La tesis central de este capítulo es que--para los latinos y las latinas--el ser humano es intrínsecamente comunitario o relacional. Esta “antropología orgánica” (p. 76) se opone al individualismo moderno liberal (pp. 53-65), ya que ve a la persona como un “sacramento” (pp. 48-53).

Partiendo de la tesis elaborada en el tercer capítulo--a saber, que si el ser humano está constituido por sus relaciones comunitarias, la persona se define por sus interacciones-- el cuarto analiza distintas definiciones de la praxis. Algunos de

los pensadores que Goizueta emplea en su análisis como compañeros de camino son Aristóteles, Marx, Gutiérrez, y Scannone, entre otros. Sin embargo, el pensador que juega un papel central tanto en este capítulo como en el resto del libro es José Vasconcelos. Goizueta afirma que Vasconcelos recalcó en sus escritos (específicamente en *Monismo Estético*) la dimensión estética de la vida humana frente a las dimensiones económicas. De aquí Goizueta deriva una definición de praxis que afirma el *ser*--no el *hacer*--como el elemento clave de la vida humana. Este entendimiento de la praxis se opone a las definiciones que, partiendo de la cosmovisión moderna, definen al ser humano en base a su habilidad para producir bienes económicos (Goizueta emplea el término griego "*poiesis*" para describir esta visión contraria a su definición de *praxis*).

El quinto capítulo avanza y concluye la exposición sobre el tema de la praxis, estableciendo puntos de contacto entre la antropología teológica hispana descrita en el segundo capítulo y la definición de praxis derivada de la discusión anterior. Esto le lleva a afirmar que la praxis, según se revela en el Catolicismo Popular, es: 1) Sacramental; 2) Comunitaria o relacional; 3) Un fin en sí misma; 4) Habilitadora (ya que provee o afirma el valor intrínseco del ser humano); 5) Liberadora.

En el sexto capítulo de su libro, Goizueta pregunta cómo se ubican estas perspectivas teológicas hispanas en el mundo teológico postmoderno. En su análisis Goizueta se coloca en la corriente latinoamericana que--siguiendo a Habermas--entiende que el llamado movimiento postmoderno no es sino la crisis de la modernidad; no una etapa nueva y distinta en el desarrollo intelectual de la humanidad. Esto le lleva a acercarse con "sospecha ideológica" a los "postulados" de la postmodernidad (sobre todo a los de la escuela de Lyotard) que definen el movimiento como la "incredulidad hacia los meta-relatos" y, por lo tanto, hacia la historia misma.

Es decir, Goizueta afirma que el pensamiento postmoderno parte del mismo supuesto ideológico que el moderno: el racionalismo. De aquí que los argumentos basados en estas formas de pensamiento afirman una dicotomía entre la razón y las emociones (que son vistas como irracionales). Esto le lleva a la conclusión de que tanto la antropología moderna como la postmoderna son contrarias a la hispana, que, al afirmar el mestizaje, afirma el valor y la coexistencia de la razón y las emociones.

Como vemos, Goizueta describe la experiencia hispana en los primeros capítulos, y la analiza en los capítulos centrales. En el capítulo final vuelve a describir la experiencia hispana a la luz de las nuevas perspectivas derivadas de su exposición (de ahí la estructura "circular" del escrito). Aquí Goizueta esboza una teología basada en la opción preferencial por "los pobres"--en categorías que van

más allá de lo meramente económico--entendida como un proceso de acompañamiento pastoral.

En unión a las fuentes indicadas anteriormente, hay tres nombres que recurren a través de todo el escrito. Estos son Virgilio Elizondo, Justo L. González y Ada María Isasi-Díaz. Para Goizueta, el pensamiento de Elizondo es instrumental para el análisis de la religiosidad popular católica y del mestizaje que esta implica. Por su parte, González es instrumental en la crítica de la pensamiento teológico anglo-europeo y en la crítica de la cultura (en especial, en la crítica del pensamiento postmoderno). Finalmente, Isasi-Díaz es una "compañera de camino" que comparte su entendimiento de praxis como la afirmación de y la lucha por la vida.

Como indicamos anteriormente, la fortaleza de Goizueta radica en su excelente manejo de la metodología teológica. En este sentido, su libro es un modelo para todas aquellas personas que desean hacer teología desde una perspectiva hispana. A esto debemos sumar la impecable erudición del autor, quien demuestra su amplio conocimiento teológico y filosófico a través de sus muchos e interesantes argumentos.


Ahora bien, hay varios aspectos del libro que podrían ser retomados--o debatidos--por aquellas personas que deseen entrar en diálogo con los puntos presentados por Goizueta. Por ejemplo, el autor toma la religiosidad popular católica México-americana como paradigmática para la experiencia hispana. Sin embargo, Goizueta es de extracción cubana. Esto me lleva a preguntar si es posible desarrollar argumentos similares partiendo de la religiosidad popular católica caribeña. Creo que esto es un tema que valdría la pena explorar, ya que hay miles de personas católicas hispanas en los Estados Unidos que no se identifican con la devoción guadalupana. Del mismo modo, las prácticas religiosas que Goizueta estudia en su libro están bastante cerca de la teología católica normativa. Hay que preguntar si aquellas prácticas religiosas populares hispanas que son sólo marginalmente cristianas--tales como la Santería y el Espiritismo--afirman la misma "antropología teológica hispana" que el autor encuentra en las devociones populares católicas.

Finalmente, debo confesar que he leído el libro desde mi propia ubicación social. Soy una persona de extracción puertorriqueña, que nunca ha sido católica. Mis muchas experiencias con la religiosidad popular caribeña han sido muy negativas. En este sentido, mi contexto social "hispano" es muy distinto al descrito por Goizueta. No obstante, la especificidad del contexto socio-histórico del libro, lejos de desanimarme, me invita a entrar en diálogo con la teología católica hispana y a aprender a apreciar la hermosura y la vitalidad de la religiosidad popular de nuestro pueblo latino en los Estados Unidos.

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